

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

-----090380 240250Z /66

R 231738Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4697

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 05829

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: PSOE LEADERS ON "MARXISM" ISSUE
REF: MADRID 5140

1. AT LUNCH WITH THE CHARGE MAY 19, PSOE LEADERS LUIS YANEZ AND ENRIQUE MUGICA ATTEMPTED (WITHOUT TOO MUCH SUCCESS) TO DOWNPLAY THE ISSUE RAISED BY PARTY SECGEN FELIPE GONZALEZ REGARDING ELIMINATION OF THE TERM "MARXISM" FROM THE PARTY'S SELF-DEFINITION, BUT THEY ALSO SAID FLATLY THEY AGREED WITH GONZALEZ THAT THE WORD WAS BETTER LEFT OUT.

2. REHEARSING SOME OF THE EARLY REACTION FROM PSOE LEADERS (REFTEL), YANEZ NOTED GONZALEZ HAD VARIOUS TIMES BEFORE, BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY, EXPRESSED HIMSELF ALONG THESE LINES, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT SO EXTENSIVELY. GONZALEZ HAD HAD IN MIND THE THREE ARGUMENTS THAT (1) THE MARXIST DESCRIPTION WAS ONLY ADDED IN DECEMBER 1976 (AND GONZALEZ, YANEZ AND MUGICA ALL THOUGHT THE ADDITION HAD BEEN A MISTAKE); (2) IT WAS A FACTOR OF EXCLUSION UNDESIRABLE IN A PARTY WITH MAJORITY PRETENSIONS; AND (3) IT WAS ELECTORALLY PREJUDICIAL IN PROVIDING THE PARTY'S MORE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION AN EASY STICK WITH WHICH TO BEAT IT.

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3. GONZALEZ HAD NOT REALLY WANTED TO JOIN THE ISSUE NOW, HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO YANEZ, AND HE HIMSELF FELT THAT THE NUMBER AND GRAVITY OF SPAIN'S PROBLEMS REQUIRED THE RELEGATION TO A MUCH LOWER PRIORITY OF SO "BYZANTINE" AND "ANGEL-COUNTING" AN EXERCISE AS DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT THE WORD BELONGED IN THE LIST OF ADJECTIVES

FORMALLY DESCRIBING THE PARTY. SUPPORTIVE OF GONZALEZ' INTENTIONS, MUGICA FELT THE MATTER WAS APPROPRIATE FOR TREATMENT IN THE PARTY CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER OF THIS YEAR, BUT YANEZ SEEMED LESS CERTAIN AND MUGICA WAS NOT SURE THE CONGRESS WOULD ACTUALLY OCCUR IN DECEMBER. CERTAIN REGIONAL GROUPS (I.E. THOSE IN OPPOSITION TO THE TERM'S ELIMINATION) WERE CONTINUING TO STIR THE POT (BY REITERATING THEIR OPPOSITION AND CALLING FOR A SPECIAL PARTY CONGRESS), BUT (YANEZ AND MUGICA MADE CLEAR) THE PARTY LEADERSHIP INTENDED TO AVOID THE ISSUE'S COMING TO A HEAD ANYTIME SOON.

4. COMMENT: THE EVIDENT CARE WITH WHICH THE TWO PSOE LEADERS TREATED THE SUBJECT IS TESTIMONY TO THE CONCERN CREATED WITHIN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP BY THE ATTENTION GIVEN GONZALEZ' REMARK. ONE SOURCE OF WORRY IS THAT GIVEN THE NECESSITY (IMPOSED BY THE PARTY'S PROUDLY DEMOCRATIC RULES) OF RESOLVING ANY SUCH QUESTION IN A PARTY CONGRESS, THERE IS SIMPLY TOO MUCH TIME FOR THE ISSUE TO FESTER AND FOR PRESSURE TO BUILD UP ON BOTH SIDES OF IT, INCREASING THE POSSIBILITY OF A BITTER AND DIVISIVE FIGHT BY THE TIME OF THE CONGRESS. ALSO DOUBTLESS OF CONCERN IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT IF GONZALEZ AND COMPANY WERE DEFEATED IN THE EFFORT (AND AFTER ALL THE PRO-MARXISM FORCES WON IN DECEMBER 1976), FORCES TO THE PARTY'S RIGHT WOULD BE ABLE TO SAY THAT THE EFFORT

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TO MODERATE THE PSOE HAS FAILED, AND THAT THE PARTY THUS REMAINS BEYOND THE PALE WITHIN WHICH ALL OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES RESIDE.

5. IT IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE LABOR MINISTRY SOURCE CLOSE TO THE PSOE, ONE OF THE MOST LEFTIST-INCLINED PSOE FEDERATIONS -- THE MADRID FEDERATION -- CAME TO A 67 TO 67 DEADLOCK WHEN IT CAME TO A VOTE FOR OR AGAINST THE "MARXISM" TAG DURING A MEETING LAST WEEKEND. IT WAS FINALLY LEFT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE MEETING TO CAST THE DECIDING VOTE, AND HE VOTED IN FAVOR OF KEEPING THE TERM. THE INFERENCE DRAWN BY OUR SOURCE WAS THAT IF THE VOTE WAS THAT CLOSE IN THE MADRID FEDERATION, THEN MOST OF THE OTHER MORE MODERATE-INCLINED PSOE PROVINCIAL FEDERATIONS WOULD SUPPORT FELIPE GONZALEZ' STAND. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH ALFONSO GUERRA WAS USED TO PLAYING THE ROLE OF DEVIL'S ADVOCATE FOR THE LEFT WING OF THE PSOE, "HE IS SOLIDLY BEHIND FELIPE". END COMMENT. EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, MARXISM, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, OFFICIAL LANGUAGE, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID05829
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780218-0184
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780530/aaaaaypg.tel
Line Count: 113
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2d970799-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 MADRID 5140
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2606966
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PSOE LEADERS ON "MARXISM" ISSUE
TAGS: PINT, SP, US, PSOE, (YANEZ, LUIS), (MUGICA, ENRIQUE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2d970799-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014